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7PM-CIA-POMs; BJT - 2 TAKES; 490-620

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WASHINGTON (AP) - CIA INTERROGATION EXPERTS WANTED TO USE TRUTH DRUGS ON AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR RETURNING FROM THE KOREAN CONFLICT; BUT THE PLAN WAS VETOED BY GOVERNMENT HEALTH OFFICIALS.

THE PLAN WAS OUTLINED ROUGHLY IN CIA DOCUMENTS RELEASED TODAY UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

ACCORDING TO THE PREVIOUSLY SECRET DOCUMENTS; MEMBERS OF A CIA PROJECT ON IMPROVING INTERROGATION METHODS HOPED TO USE THEIR TECHNIQUES ON POWs RETURNING FROM KOREA IN 1953. MEMOS ON THEIR MEETINGS SHOW THEY DISCUSSED DRUGS; SHOCK TREATMENTS; HYPNOSIS; ULTRASONICS AND OTHER MIND CONTROL METHODS WITHOUT STATING WHETHER ALL THESE WERE CONSIDERED FOR USE ON THE POWs.

MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT; FIRST CODE-NAMED BLUEBIRD AND LATER ARTICHOKE; EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO USE THEIR TECHNIQUES IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE THEIR EXPERTISE AND UNCOVER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE ABOUT INTERROGATION METHODS USED BY THE NORTH KOREANS.

ARTICHOKE BEGAN IN 1951 BECAUSE OF CONCERN OVER THE USE OF TRUTH DRUGS AND OTHER INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES BY THE SOVIETS. IT APPARENTLY WAS ESTABLISHED IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE THE CIA WITH NEW MEANS OF INTERROGATING OR INDOCTRINATING PRISONERS OR DOUBLE AGENTS AS WELL AS WITH DEFENSES AGAINST SOVIET TECHNIQUES.

OVER A SERIES OF MEETINGS; MEMBERS OF THE ARTICHOKE GROUP DISCUSSED OFFERING THEIR SERVICES IN THE INTERROGATION OF RETURNING POWs. THEY Bemoaned THAT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE TO GET THE POWs HOME AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE "HAD INTERFERED WITH A WELL WORKED-OUT PROGRAM IN CONNECTION WITH THE POWs."

ONE PANEL MEMBER; WHOSE NAME WAS DELETED IN THE DECLASSIFIED REPORT; "TOLD OF THE ARTICHOKE EFFORTS TO ASSIST IN THE INTERROGATION OF THE RETURNEES;" BUT "OWING TO PUBLICITY (SURROUNDING THE POWs) AND POOR HANDLING; THE ARTICHOKE TECHNIQUES COULD NOT PROBABLY BE BROUGHT TO BEAR."

STILL; THE CIA MEN HOPED TO USE THE TRUTH DRUGS SODIUM AMYTAL AND SODIUM PENTOTHAL ON THE RETURNEES; BUT THEY NOTED IN A LATER MEETING THAT "THIS HAD BEEN RULED OUT COMPLETELY BY THE SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE."

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UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THESE DRUGS IT IS SOMETIMES POSSIBLE TO PERSUADE PERSONS TO TALK ABOUT SUBJECTS THEY OTHERWISE WOULD NOT DISCUSS; EITHER BECAUSE THE TOPICS ARE TOO PAINFUL TO RECALL OR ARE CONSIDERED OFFICIAL SECRETS.

AMONG THE ARTICHOKE GROUP'S OTHER INTERESTS WAS DEVELOPMENT OF DRUGS OR TECHNIQUES THAT WOULD ALLOW CIA AGENTS TO RESIST SUCH TRUTH DRUGS. ONE DOCUMENT TOLD OF A CIA MAN WHO WAS TO ENTER A HOSPITAL FOR AN OPERATION; BUT CONFIDED IN HIS SUPERIORS THAT ANESTHETICS MADE HIM TALKATIVE.

THE AGENCY DEALT WITH THE PROBLEM BY PLACING AN AGENCY OFFICIAL IN THE OPERATING ROOM AND BY MAKING THE MEDICAL PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION SIGN A SECRECY AGREEMENT.

THAT CASE LED ARTICHOKE PERSONNEL TO EXPRESS HOPES THAT SOMEDAY THEY COULD DEVELOP AN AMNESIA DRUG THAT COULD BE USED TO WIPE OUT SOME MEMORIES OF CIA PERSONNEL WHEN NECESSARY.

MEMBERS OF ARTICHOKE ALSO DISCUSSED THE CIA'S DESIRE TO TALK WITH WILLIAM M. DATIS, AN ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTER WHO HAD BEEN INTERROGATED WHILE JAILED IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

DATIS WAS ARRESTED IN APRIL 1951 IN THE AP'S PRAGUE OFFICE; TAKEN FIRST TO THE SECRET POLICE STATION; THEN A FEW DAYS LATER TO A PRISON WHERE HE WAS INTERROGATED.

IN JULY, HE WAS TRIED AND SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ALLEGED ESPIONAGE. IN MAY 1953 HIS SENTENCE WAS COMMUTED AND HE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES.

AN AP SPOKESMAN SAID THE NEWS COOPERATIVE HAD THEN AND STILL HAS A POLICY AGAINST OFFERING ITS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS FOR DEBRIEFING BY THE CIA BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS MIGHT CONCLUDE THERE WAS A LINK BETWEEN THE CIA AND THE AP.

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